A POSIE OF Spiritual Flowers,

Presented to a Christian Lady.

BEING

Several Pious INSTRUCTIONS for her Conduct in the w[illegible] of Virtue.

AND

Very Useful for all such, who live amidst the dangerous Employments of the World. (3)

Translated out of French.

Blessed is that Servant, whom when his Lord cometh, he shall find so doing, Matth. 24. 46.

Printed *Anno Domini* 1675.

To the Pious Matrons of our *English Nation.*

IT *is usual with those who are obliged to remain in Cities Infected with the Plague, besides the Potions which they take at set times, to carry somewhat in their hands to smell to, as a continual antidote against the continual assaults of that Disease. What greater Pestilence then Sin? & what place can be more infected therewith then the World? where even that property of the Plague is not wanting, but rather is in a very high degree,* (viz.) *That every one striveth*

to taint his Neighbour : for which reason, as the danger is, as it were, un-interrupted, so ought likewise the remedy to be; and therefore You, who are constrained by your condition not to flie into the Deserts, must not content your selves with your Spiritual Exercises at appointed hours, but carry about you some perpetual preservative: Such, Ladies, is this little Nosegay, which if you bear in your hands by a devout Practice, I doubt not but its Flowers will afford you here a delightsome savour, and hereafter, instead of withering like other Flowers, turn into a Garland for you of never-fading Glory.

A

A Posie of Spiritual Flowers,

Presented to a Christian Lady:

BEING

Several Pious Instructions for her Conduct in the way of Virtue.

I.

HAve always a very low esteem of your self, & sincerely think that you are much less than you can imagine, in regard that self-love deprives you of the true knowledge of your Imperfections, and that other persons do not acquaint you with them for fear of displeasing you: On which consideration

deration you must establish a great distrust of your own self in all your Purposes, Censures, and Opinions, especially when they meet with any contradiction from others.

II. Have on the other side a very high esteem of the Goodness, Excellency and Majesty of God, which is so great, that though you had the understanding of all the Cherubins, you could not during the whole term of your life comprehend the 1000th. part thereof could it be divided: On this foundation you must build a great

confidence in his Power and Goodneſs, and make a general reſignation of your ſelf, and all you have, into his moſt holy Providence.

III. Let it be the principal deſign of all your actions, and daily (if you can) renew a reſolution, to do nothing, But,

1. *What God will.*
2. *As he will.*
3. *When he will.* And,
4. *For what he will.*

Beg often light to diſcern theſe four things, with vigour and ſtrength to put them in execution.

IV. Let both your general and particular Intention be to pleaſe God in all your works: And when ever you go about to pleaſe the Creatures, Be ſure that you deſire not to pleaſe them any farther then you believe it pleaſing to God.

V. Conſider often that God is every where, and in all things, acting in them, and concurring with them in all that is done, except Sin.

VI. Look upon your ſelf as a Creature depending wholly upon God, to whom you appertain by the titles of your Creation, Conſervation

on & Redemption; and for that reaſon do not preſume to diſpoſe of your ſelf, or any thing which you imagine to be yours, but with his good pleaſure. In effect, all Creatures are the Demeans & Moveables of God Almightie: They are likewiſe ſo many Inſtruments by which he worketh and provideth for us in our neceſſities. Wherefore deſpiſe not any Creature, treat them all with reſpect, and laſtly, have patience to bear with them in their defects, ſince God himſelf is content to do ſo.

VII.

VII. Endure with patience the departure, abſence and even the death of Creatures, particularly of thoſe that are moſt dear to you, in which you placed the greateſt confidence, and from which you expected moſt comfort and aſſiſtance in your affairs, caſting your eye with great readineſs on the Divine Providence, which manageth all things for your advantage, as you will perceive afterwards, if you continue patient & inwardly recollected.

VIII. Make no account of your Credit, Goods, Eſtate, Vaſſals, Family and Dome-

sticks, nor of the Honour done to you by great Personages, nor of your own high Birth, Gentile Disposition, or other good quality whatsoever, but only to humble your self, and tremble the more in the sight of God, acknowledging your self indebted and responsible for all these things before His most severe Tribunal, where you will be judged according to the good or bad use you have made thereof. Take not any notice of the Discourses which People frame to your praise, but rather consider the faults that they observe in You. IX.

IX. Hold that Person for your best friend, who acquainteth you with your failings; since He doth for You what you ought to do for your self: And even when any one shall reprehend you in choler or reproach, omit not to advantage your self thereby, it being of very little importance to You in what manner y'are brought to the knowledge of your faults; and provided you contribute nothing to the irregularitie of your Neighbour, you must endeaovur to gather Honey from every sort of Flowers.

X.

X. You must preserve a mild and sweet temper as well towards your self, as your neighbour: And therefore be not discourag'd when you fail in some things against your good purposes, but humble your self with sweetness of spirit before God, imploring his pardon, and resolving by his grace to take better care for the future; and then confiding no more in your own strength, but in his alone, proceed with greater courage than before.

XI. Enter at least three times every day into your Oratory to confer and treat there with our Lord. In

In the Morning,

After the devout Aſpirations which You ſhall have made at your awaking, riſe with as much ſpeed as you can, & then preſent your ſelf on your knees before Almighty God to pray unto him.

1. *Adoring him.*
2. *Thanking him.*
3. *Offering to Him Your Heart, your good Purpoſes, and your Day's imployment.*
4. *Craving his Grace.*

All this muſt be done according to the form which You have had, or may have from your Director. Be conſtant in this pious Exerciſe,

beir

being the most important one of the whole day.

XII. *Before Dinner*, You must reflect upon the Forenoon past, and examine whether you have performed your good Resolutions, and done those things which you purposed in the morning. Then Cut out other work for the rest of the day. Above all in your particular Examination, have an eye to the Passion which you have to moderate, and the virtue which you have to gain.

XIII. *In the Evening*, At a convenient hour take leave of

of your Guests and others in the best manner you can, giving order for their good accommodation: After this, regulate your Domestick Affairs for the morrow; Then, making a reasonable truce with your cares, recite the *Litany of the Blessed Virgin*. Give thanks to God for his Benefits; Beg of Him light to discern the state of your Soul; Examine how you have spent the day; Beg pardon for your sins; Purpose firmely to mend your Life, craving the Divine Grace in order thereunto: Recommend your self to the Saints,

Saints, & particularly to those to whom you have most Devotion. Afterwards you may go to bed, forbearing to talk or speak any thing but what is necessary. Endeavour to repose in God, laying both your Person and Affairs on His Divine Providence.

XIV. In the Day-time often aspire and lift up your heart to God, casting amorous glances on his Divine Presence.

XV. When it happeneth, that any one cometh to treat of Business with you, before you admit him into your chamber, or go out to meet him,

him, Beſeech God by a ſigh to vouchſafe to be at that conference, and then treat with that perſon as if you beheld God preſent, and making the third, for ſo moſt aſſuredly He is.

XVI. When any of your Affairs are to be deferred for ſome time, write them on a Book for that purpoſe, which you muſt review Morning, Noon and Night, when you are to cut out your work, that you may take in hand thoſe buſineſſes that are moſt preſſing, or for which opportunities do offer themſelves.

XVII.

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XVII.

XVII. Make one List of your Credits, and another of your Debts, which last You must endeavour to satisfie as soon as you can, fearing to detain that which belongeth to another to his prejudice; since what we owe is no longer ours.

XVIII. Let your Mind be always so disposed, that You had rather your Neighbour should keep something of Yours, then You any thing of his against his will.

XIX. Have a great care of Your Family & Domestick Servants, supplying all their necessities according to Justice

ice and reason, and endeavouring likewise to make them observe the Commandments of God & the Church; for which end You must cause them to be Catechised, and exhorted by some good and discreet Religious or Ecclesiasticks, as occasion shall offer it self; But if no occasion happeneth, you must make one, knowing that You will be well rewarded for this trouble not only in Your Spiritual, but also in Your Temporal concerns, and particularly with Domestick quiet.

XX.

XX. Have Your Testament always readie, and re-view it every Three Months, especially if you have passed Fiftie.

XXI. State all Your Affairs, and prepare the writings with whatever else is necessary towards the bringing them to the issue, whereunto they ought to tend.

XXII. Resign your Family, Children, Estate and Affairs into the hands of God in such sort, that You look not on them any more as Yours, but as things appertaining to Him, so that in all accidents You may be able with liber-

tie

of Spirit to have recourse to his Divine Providence, and free Your self from all kind of dejection and murmuration.

XXIII. Strive that Your Domesticks and Neighbours may become as it were a part of Your Goods & Possessions, obliging them by what honest means You can, especially such as are inclined to good, since that next after God You may expect more good from them, then from any other.

XXIV. Make sometimes a Spiritual Restitution into the hands of God of whatever You

You have received from him laying at his Feet Your Soul, Bodie, Children, Kindred, Honour, Land, Goods, Health and Life, and then behold what That is, which remaineth with you, after These are restored to God, (viz.) Sin: That alone properly belongeth to You, & no part thereof to God; but all the rest came from Him. Learn hence to humble your self, not daring to make any other use of these things, then what is pleasing to Almightie God who gave them; and in case He should deprive You of any of them, You ought to

submit

bmit thereunto as readily You would have one of our Tenants do, when You mand the return of what ou lent to him.

XXV. Captivate Your Understanding, and willingly ubmit the ſame to the *Doctrine of the Church*, as well in things preciſely of Faith, as in the reſt which ſhe commonly teacheth : Behave your ſelf in like manner towards the Judgement of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, although it ſeemeth contrary and repugnant to Your own ſenſe, believing that Reaſons, whereof You

are

are ignorant, far ſtronger than Yours, made them ſpeak what they do: In fine, have a meek and humble Spirit, ſuch as permitteth it ſelf to be led and inſtructed. If by chance any thing that occurreth to You in reading, ſeemeth to ſhock Your Judgment, if it be matter of Faith, ſubmit and captivate Your Underſtanding (as St. Paul ſays) to the Obedience of the Faith; But if it be not of that kind, Yet nevertheleſs preſume not to conclude any thing to the contrarie, but ſuſpend Your Judgement therein, till ſuch time as You have

have conferred with ſome perſon capable of reſolving Your Doubt.

XXVI. Prefer always both the Works & Prayers of Obligation, before thoſe which are Voluntarie and of Your own Devotion.

XXVII. Let not Your Sacramental Confeſſions be made either by rote, or out of cuſtom only, but after that You haue ſeriouſly examined Your Conſcience, and conceived an hearty ſorrow for having offended the Majeſtie of God, with great hope of pardon for what is paſt, firm purpoſe of amendment for

the future, and such confidence in the goodness of our Lord, that notwithstanding Your frequent relapses, You still hope that He will assist You with those Graces which shall be necessarie for Your perseverance. Above all, forget not to examine what You have thought, said, or done against Remorse of Conscience, or Divine Inspirations.

XXVIII. Whatsoever Creature either offereth it self, or You chuse for your assistance either Spiritual or Temporal, or for Your Consolation, do not relie absolutely thereon, but relie only on the Provident

dent goodneſs of God, who hath been pleaſed to lend you now this Creature, and will take it from You when He thinketh fit, and inſtead thereof raiſe up others like it, or of another kind, as he judgeth convenient for you.

XXIX. Every night let your Children before they go to Bed, come and kneel before you, that you may give them your Bleſſing with the Sign of the Croſs; and if any Devout Religious Perſon lodgeth with you, deſire him to give them his.

XXX. Remember that you owe to your Children,

Your

Your Tongue.
Your Eyes. And
Your Hands.

Your Tongue to inſtruct and teach them their Duty.

Your Eyes to watch over their Manners and Haunts; but particularly to keep them from the Converſation of ſuch Domeſticks as are ill-bred, or have any evil qualities, and therefore may make on them bad Impreſſions during their tender age.

Your Hands to correct them in due time and place with Love and Diſcretion.

XXXI. In every accident or misfortune endeavour to reſt

rest contented with the appointment of God, who permitteth the same for the best, as you will understand afterwards, if you are patient and interiour: in the mean time be faithful, and persevere in your Duty. This advice, though hinted at before, by reason of its great importance, is here repeated.

XXXII. Permit no wanton Love-expressions, or other fondness of that kind in your House, either towards your own Person, Children or Domesticks, whatever Authority, Parentage or Familiarity may be

pretended; but Cut it off betimes, and let it be understood that you utterly dislike such things as those.

XXXIII. Have Your Daughters as near your person as you can, employing them continually in Praying, Reading or Working, according to your Example.

XXXIV. Be as punctual as you can in your daily Spiritual Lecture; For which, in my opinion, the most certain hour, though not the most commodious, will be the next after Dinner.

XXXV.

XXXV. Practiſe conſtantly your Particular Examination for the rooting out ſome Vice, moderating ſome Paſſion, or acquiring ſome Vertue. Herein there are ſeveral Spiritual Bookes which will help you much; whereof you may procure ſome by the advice of your Ghoſtly Father.

XXXVI. Every Week after *Saturday-veſpers*, Retire into your Oratory, and there renew your ſelf in Spirit, Repeat your good Purpoſes, and aſſume new force and vigour towards the carrying

rying on your good Designs, and Spiritual Exercises, and be not dismaied at those failings, whereof you shall perceive your self to have been guiltie the week past.

XXXVII. Enter now and then into your Oratorie to prostrate your self before the adorable Majestie of God, honouring the Holy Relicks or Images that are there. Present a sigh or two from the bottom of your Heart to our Lord, and one *Ave Maria* to the Virgin, and then go out. This seems a small matter, but will prove of great profit.

XXXVIII.

XXXVIII. If any haſtie or ſharp word or action hath eſcaped from you towards your Children, Domeſticks or others, get immediately into your Oratorie, and there bemoan your ſelf before our Lord, ſaying: *Alas! O my God, behold another ſlip: Pardon it, I beſeech thee, if it be thy Bleſſed Will.* Afterwards conſider how You may comfort the perſons afflicted, and reconcile them to God and Your ſelf, and do herein what our Lord ſhall inſpire You with due regard to Your Authority and Charity.

XXXIX.

XXXIX. When You are moved to anger, Be ſure to reſtrain the ſame as ſoon as ever You reflect thereon, and then gently re-collect and compoſe Your mind, taking great care not to reſolve, much leſs to execute any thing during this motion, it being very dangerous for a Man to act when he is leaſt a Man, and his Reaſon hath not ſo much freedom as at other times.

XL. Keep Your ſelf from Precipitation in all Your actions, which the quickneſs of Your Nature may prompt You to. And for this purpoſe

pose at least thrice a day, *viz:* in the Morning, at noon, and in the evening, Cast an Eye on Your Affairs, that You may discern what things are next to be done, and Deliberate on proper means for their accomplishment, assigning to every thing its convenient time.

XLI. When any Business cometh on You unawares, and by surprize, Submit readily Your Will to God's, and lifting up the Eyes both of Your Bodie and Mind towards Heaven, say with Your Heart, and also with Your Mouth, if You can conveni-

niently. *O my God, let that come to paſs in this matter, which is pleaſing to thee.* Then if You have no body to conſult with, and the Buſineſs requireth haſt, re-collecting Your Spirit a little, obſerve what God ſhall ſpeak to Your Heart, and do it in the beſt manner You are able. By theſe Holie and Chriſtian Exerciſes You will live contentedly on Earth now, and hereafter Reign joyfully in Heaven with Jeſus Chriſt and his Saints. *Amen.*

Laus Deo Virginiq; Matri.

FINIS.